

20 June 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

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FROM :
Chief, Information Systems Analysis Staff

SUBJECT: 19 June Meeting With Representatives From GAO
to Discuss Agency Classification/Declassification Programs

1. Subject meeting started at approximately 1320 and was attended by (OGC), and the undersigned (ISAS), and Irving Boker and Douglas Cannon (GAO). Mr. Boker opened the meeting by informing us that they were from the Logistics and Communications Division of GAO and had been tasked by three Congressional Committees to look into the general area of federal information and records. He stated that they were simply in the process of conducting surveys of a number of governmental agencies and that at this point they are most interested in just the mechanics of our classification/declassification programs especially those that insure that material is not initially over-classified and that it is declassified as soon as possible. Mr. Boker then asked if we could give him a brief run-down on how our classification and declassification programs actually function.

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2. provided a general briefing on how classification operates within the Agency. He covered this subject in very general terms and pointed out to the GAO representatives that in its present form it is a decentralized effort that basically puts responsibility for proper classification of material back on the originating organization. He provided general information on how our Top Secret document index functions as well as how the establishment and delegation of Top Secret authority is handled in the Agency.

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3. In response to direct questions, he told how the figures submitted to the ICRC on the numbers of classified documents created are generated and then went on to describe how we envision our classification programs will work under the new Executive Order including the fact that we will be establishing a more formalized system for conducting this program.

4. The undersigned then proceeded to brief them, again in general terms, on how our declassification program was structured. I informed them of the number of people that are currently involved in this program and the need we have found for staffing it with senior Agency personnel in order to obtain the wide range of knowledge we find necessary to make

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it function effectively. I went on to describe the guidelines that have been developed and how they are used and also tried to impress upon them that the proper handling of sources and methods has proven to be much more complicated than we first anticipated. I then gave them a general run-down on our current records review program, the amount of effort that is being expended and how it tied into our declassification program.

5. A short period of general conversation then followed during which several areas that had been previously covered were discussed in a bit more detail. The GAO representatives also made some general comments on the types of information they have been receiving from other governmental agencies though they were quite careful in this regard to keep from providing us with anything of a privileged nature.

6. The meeting ended in a very relaxed atmosphere and they thanked us for our time and the information that had been provided.

7. Prior to their departure, [] mentioned that we would be most interested in reviewing their report on the Agency prior to its being released officially so we could try and clear up any misinformation it might contain. Both individuals seemed to indicate that such a review might be possible but no formal arrangements were actually made.

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8. Later I asked both [] how they felt the meeting had gone in general and what they felt the true purposes of the GAO representatives had been. We agreed that everything had appeared to go very well but we were a bit confused over what had actually been accomplished by this meeting as very few direct questions had been put to us and they had basically seemed to accept everything we told them at face value. We did agree that we would all be very surprised if anything that had been covered could really be used as a basis for a negative report on the Agency programs involved.

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cc: AI/DDA

File: Class Mgt General *[Signature]*

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